

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, PROSPECTIVE
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND STRATEGIC
PARTNER WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

by

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ABSTRACT

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The strategic objective of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy is to maintain positive and progressive relations with both the European Union and the United States of America. On occasion, the goals of Bosnia's foreign policy in achieving these ends are in conflict. Reasons for that are the global political interests of the European Union and the United States of America and their security policies in this region, which on occasion identify different priorities. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to respect lessons learned about the American historical role in this country, and must consider its geopolitical position within Europe, and establish a reasonable political balance between these two powers.

There are many documents which confirm Bosnia and Herzegovina's orientation toward Euro-Atlantic integration and the European Union. Also, bilateral cooperation between the United States of America and Bosnia and Herzegovina has been very intensive and has a stabile future. Those facts have been confirmed in the statements of many European, American and Bosnian politicians. However, not much has been written about Bosnia's position between these two global powers.

This paper will review Bosnia's foreign policy objectives in regard to the European Union and the United States of America, discuss the complications in implementing that policy, and offer recommendation for the future.

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, PROSPECTIVE MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND STRATEGIC PARTNER WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE POLITICAL-SECURITY SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

GENERAL HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In a history stretching over more than thousand years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced much unpleasantness. Bosnia and Herzegovina has often been subjected to the influence of global political-military movements, which have influenced life styles as well as the security situation, and produced many wars. The first appearance of a unified Bosnian state came in the tenth century. At the end of twelve century, under the rule of Kulin Ban, Bosnia and Herzegovina became very prosperous. During the following two centuries Bosnia was an established kingdom, but it experienced many internal problems. Subsequently, five hundred years of governance by the Ottoman Empire left a powerful mark with extremely significant implications. The influence of that period is visible today in culture, architecture, and religion. Although it was of less duration, a period of rule by the Austro-Hungarian Empire was of comparable importance, and has left traces on the current general situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, Austro-Hungarian influence is recognizable in Bosnian architecture, culture, language, and education. The twentieth century, including two World Wars and fifty years as a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was especially important for today's political-security situation. In short, during its long history, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the whole Balkan Peninsula, has been broadly subject to the powerful interests of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and German Empires, and well as other more or less influential regional actors.

The Bosnian land has been a point of intersection between Europe and Asia, Eastern and Western culture, different national interests, and Islam and Christianity. As a result, Bosnian society has combined a variety of life styles and cultures. This diversity has exerted a tremendous influence on the demographic and social structure of the entire region.

The Balkans is commonly described as a point of intersection between the world's major monotheistic religions – Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of the Christian faith, Islam, and the remnants of what were once significant Jewish communities in urban centers such as Istanbul, Sarajevo and Thessalonica.¹

Actually, it has formed a beautiful mosaic of Bosnian heritage composed of many different ethnicities, customs, religions, traditions, cultures, and languages. That abundance of diversity has been a major reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been a unique and interesting country. Bosnian citizens were very proud to be a part of this uncertainty. However, diversity has also been a decisive factor promoting antagonistic ethnic identities and strong ethno-national feeling. Diversity has provided a fruitful soil for aggressive nationalistic ideas and political movements that became dangerous tools in the hand of ambitious politicians.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, like the entire Balkan region, suffered during much of its existence due to its subordination to the great world powers. Many of the influences that came and were supported from abroad were disastrous for the country and its people. Dealing with the complex political-security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a challenge for external rulers and indigenous leaders for centuries. Unfortunately, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have often been victims of the solutions imposed. Before World War I the entire region, and especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, was under strong Austro-Hungarian administrative control, used in part to encourage the exploitation of natural resources. The twentieth century was not only a period of strong external influence on the Balkan region; it was also a period of disastrous internal political movements and conflicts. Of course, World War I and World War II were very important for the evolution of both Balkan security and Bosnian state identity. First of all, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empires were broken apart. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established after First World War, but it officially recognized only three ethnic communities: Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians. Current Bosnian territory was accorded no political status within the new Yugoslavia. This was a period of large nationalistic movements within the country. Democratic institutions and economical development were neglected, and remained on a very low level. Only after the Second World War was Bosnia and Herzegovina recognized as one of the six federal republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Under the strong influence of the Communist Party and the leadership style of President Tito, Yugoslavia and its Republics enjoyed prosperity and well being during the post-World War II period. Due to political and economic resistance to pressure from the Soviet Union, cultivation of a leadership role within the international nonaligned movement, and because of its specific strategic geographic position, as a buffer zone between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, Yugoslavia became a respected member of the international community. Yugoslavia also

received economic support from the United States of America (U.S.). A new Constitution, promulgated in 1974, recognized a greater degree of independence for each of the federal units. Generally, Bosnia and Herzegovina moved toward a situation closer to that existing today, and Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and Serbs became officially equal.

Of course, the turbulent events of the last decade of the twentieth century have decisively affected the current demographic and political-security situation, with tremendous consequences for Bosnian reality. The last decade of the previous century was the most significant for shaping today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, hegemonic and nationalistic ideas, promoted by Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, led former Yugoslavia into a disastrous war. The war arrived on Bosnian territory after the results of the referendum on Bosnian independence, conducted on 1 March 1992, were made public. That important event, which expressed the will of more than sixty percent of Bosnian citizens, permanently disrupted the plans of hostile neighboring political forces from both East and West. It was the beginning of the end of Milosevic's hegemonic idea about establishing a Greater Serbia inspired by exclusionary nationalism. However, it also provided an opening for aggression against a new, internationally recognized country.

The collapse of Yugoslavia was followed by a severe, long-lasting and bloody war, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting in enormous human and material losses, the destruction of the economy and the entire infrastructure, the creation of a huge number of expelled people, refugees and many people reduced to total poverty.²

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina lasted from April 1992 until November 1995, and was characterized by ethnic cleansing, war crimes, the fight for secession by ethnic groups, the destruction of state level institutions, and the physical destruction of the country. The war exhausted the people and leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina and at times sapped the will of leaders to rebuild the country. It should be noted that the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initially considered to be a European issue. At the same time, Europe did not have a clear and unified political approach to the problem. Additionally, although the United Nations was engaged in peace operations, the focus was on humanitarian assistance, and the level of commitment was insufficient. European countries and the United Nations were reluctant to commit the ground troops that would be necessary to stop the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The U.S. would not confront its allies on this issue, and the conflict became protracted.

Unfortunately, Bosnia and Herzegovina's case has been just one of the templates used by the international community to deal with such crises. But, the fact is that the Dayton Peace Accords, which was arranged by international community, effectively terminated the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The internationally brokered Dayton Peace Agreement was negotiated by representatives of the parties involved in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the neighboring Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, at US-led talks in Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995. On November 21, the parties successfully concluded the negotiations, and on December 14, they signed the Dayton Peace Agreement in Paris. The Peace Agreement established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state comprising two Entities, each with a high degree of autonomy: the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³

The Dayton Peace Agreement was a very important political act, which stopped one of the bloodiest wars in modern history. In accordance with the Agreement, many vital issues have been carefully considered and effectively addressed. These include the military aspects of the peace settlement, regional stabilization, establishing an inter-entity boundary line, arranging elections, promulgation of a new national Constitution, arbitration, promotion of human rights, attention to the lot of refugees and displaced persons, measures to preserve and defend national monuments, creation of public corporations, and increased civilian implementation including the international police task forces. However, although the war has been stopped, a real will for building and strengthening country is still not in place.

THE POSTWAR PERIOD AND INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Subject to different influences and conflicting sources of external support, especially from Yugoslavia and Croatia, the political interests and objectives of the belligerents in Bosnia and Herzegovina were divergent from the very beginning of Bosnia's official existence. As a consequence, the establishment of a unified country and creation of democratic institutions seemed at the outset to be an impossible mission.

Also, different political parties and ethnic communities supported different political options. Most of the political parties of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina were in favor of establishing state level institutions. However, parties from the Republika Srpska emphasized the importance of existing communities as independent administrative entities. Their politicians very often obstructed efforts to strengthen state level government and transfer authority from local to state institutions. Politicians from the Republika Srpska have also been the most serious obstacle to recent reforms in the fields of security, defense, interior affairs, and intelligence. Due

to their failure to cooperate with the International Tribunal for War Crimes in Former Yugoslavia, on two occasions Bosnia and Herzegovina was not allowed to join the NATO Partnership for Peace Program. The High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lord Paddy Ashdown, accused leaders from the Republika Srpska of being the main barrier to further state development and overall progress.

At this moment Bosnian political parties and leaders do not share a unified vision of the country's future. There is still a huge gap between their respective political approaches and actions. It is interesting to note that the authorities of the Republika Srpska would like to freeze the initial Dayton Peace Agreement administrative arrangement. However, the main purpose of the agreement was to stop the bloody war. This has now been transcended and the further existence of the agreement in its current form is problematic. Serious consideration needs to be given to the effort to create new, more effective political arrangements, and to change the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in such a way as to keep the country politically independent and facilitate its integration into the community of prosperous and democratic countries and organizations. This issue will be very sensitive in the current phase. In fact, the political authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have launched a huge, organized, resistance to change. They are well supported by the neighboring country of Serbia and Montenegro, which seeks to maintain a strong Republika Srpska. However, it is well known that the Republika Srpska exists as a result of ethnic cleaning and the nationalistic policy of the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic. Unfortunately, the Serb leadership's aspiration to separate from Bosnia and Herzegovina and join with Serbia and Montenegro is still alive.

It has been almost ten years since the end of the war. Nonetheless, some critical peace agreement provisions, such as the capture of indicted war criminals and return of displaced persons, have not been completed. Also, the political integration of the country is very uncertain. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains dependent upon strong international involvement and the imposition of laws and decisions by the High Representative. Taking these facts into account, it is possible to conclude that some important political subjects are not actually interested in political stabilization in the interest of the well being and long term security of the country.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

The Dayton Agreement is so fragile that the war will start again should the international troops ever leave. Bosnia is a military protectorate, but one for which the occupying forces are reluctant to take political responsibility. The three local elites are comfortable with the arrangement as it guarantees them power within their own communities. The way the maps defining Serbs, Croat and

Muslim-controlled territory are drawn undermines the economic development of all three communities, while the political arrangement discourages cooperation between them. The settlement is, in short, full of anomalies and frictions. The Bosnian question remains unanswered.⁴

Thanks to the mutual efforts of Bosnian patriots and international organizations such as: the United Nations, the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina has survived, and is on the path to become a democratic and prosperous country. Although many countries supported Bosnia and Herzegovina on its long road toward freedom and recovery, the United States of America played the most decisive and positive role.

The recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be remembered as a period marked by the predominant influence of the international community. The Dayton Peace Agreement provides significant rights to the Office of High Representative and NATO for implementing the civil and military aspect of the peace. That has been an effective tool for constraining military and political authorities to carry out basic obligations. Experience has shown that authorities from those two organizations have often been obligated to undertake certain measures, sometimes with a quite radical character, in order to ensure a prosperous future for Bosnian citizens. It has been common for the High Representative to dismiss state level politicians because they were obstructing implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. This was the case with one of the Serb Members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the President of Republika Srpska, as well as many other politicians and military officers, mostly from the Republika Srpska. Also, the High Representative has often used its authority to make critical political decisions. His most recent important action, in December 2004, affected the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the High Representative, two Ministries from the Republika Srpska bear some responsibility for the fact that the most important individuals indicted for war crimes are still free. The High Representative argues that the further existence of these institutions is a big obstacle blocking the emergence of a normal security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

NATO played a very constructive and progressive role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its Implementation (IFOR) and Stabilization Forces (SFOR) were responsible for oversight and support implementation of the military part of agreement. Some of their achievements relate to defense reforms, confidence building measures, capturing persons accused of war crimes, disarmament, joint military doctrine development and civil affairs in support of the return of displaced persons. Although situation has been changed, NATO is supposed to continue its

decisive role in the area of defense reforms and contribute enhancing overall security in the country.

There are other international organizations that are also very influential and could contribute to an improvement of the political-security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been very much involved in the areas of security, education, human rights, and law enforcement. Also, the United Nations still plays and will continue to play an important role. Finally, the EU is a very important factor, to which more attention will be devoted in a subsequent chapter.

International organizations and individual countries have a huge influence on the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, it is not a good situation for any country when it does not enjoy real sovereignty. However, recent lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina teach us that the existing political situation makes strong involvement by the international community essential. It may not be ideal for domestic political development, but for Bosnian citizens it is an essential phase on the road toward a more safe and prosperous future.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ON THE PATH TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Membership in the EU has been a challenge and political objective for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as many other South-east European countries. Joining means a new opportunity for economical prosperity, regional security, democratization, human rights, and freedom of movement. However, at same time, it means a huge political obligation for those countries. Most of them have to adopt their standards to the EU standards. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the countries that is trying tried hard to apply all its resources to the challenge of Euro-Atlantic integration. This initiative began with Bosnian independence and it has been one of the priorities of Bosnian foreign policy. According to the Commission of the European Communities Report from 18 November 2003:

Relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union have greatly developed in recent years. From 1996 Bosnia and Herzegovina benefited from "Phare" and "Obnova" assistance. In 1997 the European Union established its Regional Approach and the Council of Ministers established political and economic conditionality for the development of bilateral relations. In 1998 an European Union Declaration on "Special Relations between European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina" led to the establishment of the European Union - Bosnia and Herzegovina Consultative Task Force to assist in the preparation of contractual relations. In 1999 the Stabilization and Association process offered

the prospect of integration into European Union structures and in 2000 the European Union Road Map identified the first concrete steps on this journey.⁵

The EU has seriously considered Bosnia and Herzegovina's interest in membership. But, before starting official negotiation for Stabilization and Association process, Bosnian authorities must demonstrate visible political-security achievements and sincere readiness to be partner with modern, democratic and developed European countries. This will sometime demand radical reforms of various aspects of political-economic life and security.

Requirements for Association and Current Reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Membership in prosperous organizations always offers some benefits, but it is common that potential members need to fulfill some obligations and establish required standards before achieving formal association. The Council of Ministers of the EU has formulated priority areas where Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to demonstrate significant progress. In fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina took the initiative and has accomplished more than anybody could expect. According to the Report of the Directorate of European Integration of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina of 22 July 2004, Bosnia and Herzegovina should make progress in sixteen priority areas.⁶ These areas are defined and requested by the European Commission Report to the Council of Ministers of the EU, with the aim of preparing negotiations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union on a Stabilization and Association Agreement. Those areas relate to complying with existing conditionality and international obligations; more effective governance; more effective public administration; European integration; effective human rights provisions; effective judiciary; tackling crime, especially organized crime; managing asylum and migration; customs and taxation reform; budget legislation; budget practice; reliable statistics; consistent trade policy; integrated energy market; developing the Bosnia and Herzegovina single economic space; and public broadcasting.

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina has been offered a "European perspective" at recent European Union summits, it is not yet being prepared for future European Union candidacy in practical policy areas. Negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement will not begin until Bosnia and Herzegovina has made further progress on fulfilling the 16 priority areas of reform identified in the European Commission's Feasibility Studies.⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina still has international support for different aspects of the reform process, and Europeans still look at Bosnian security issue as their responsibility. The Bosnian authorities know that the EU is very decisive about keeping high standards for the association process. Not a single Bosnian politician publicly opposes accession to the EU. However, many

political problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina still stand in the way of the accession process. Most of those problems exist because some influential local politicians believe in the nationalist ideal of separation. They know that if Bosnia and Herzegovina remains at a distance from Euro-Atlantic association, they will be closer to their nationalistic objective, which is furthered by chaos and instability. It is fact that they impede and minimize the efforts of progressive political subjects, but they cannot stop these efforts. Still, reactionary political forces will be considered successful if they succeed in postponing political progress for as long as possible. Fortunately, these reactionary forces are well known, and the international community, especially the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the U.S. State Department, have undertaken many measures to prevent their action. But, it is also a fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is internationally more isolated today than it was five years ago.

In a recent report, the Directorate of European Integration describes the present political and economic situation, Bosnia's ability to fulfill obligations, and the institutional structure that is necessary for accession into the EU. Also, each priority area is analyzed in terms of necessary action, general summary, indicators which demonstrate the level and quality of action, currently achieved progress, and further strategy. Here are some facts about Bosnian achievements:

The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina has, since the beginning of this year, adopted 40 laws from its Program of Activities for the implementation of priorities, out of which 20 laws have been adopted by both houses of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16 laws are currently undergoing parliamentary procedure, and 4 laws are going to be submitted to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of July 2004 . . . The new Action Plan for Priority Reforms for the period June 2004 – January 2005 was adopted this June, which includes 337 new measures.⁸

IMPORTANCE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The benefits of Bosnian accession to the family of European countries should benefit both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU. It is true that Bosnian political stability is a Bosnian internal issue, but it is also a European security problem.

Europe is very interested in maintaining a stable Balkans. Today, some years after the war, Europe has begun to play one of the most important roles in this region. Europe agrees about the objectives that need to be achieved and methods that need to be applied, but there are still some misunderstandings between European countries. The main European objective is to establish legitimate democratic control over executive authorities and stop corruption,

organized crime and illegal migration. In accordance with the EU's Security Strategy, solving these problems will be a critical measure of success or failure.

If these challenges are not properly addressed, it will have serious consequences not only for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Europe but also for the further development of the European Security and Defense Policy, and hence also for the premises of the European Security Strategy⁹

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to struggle with many internal problems, the country has shown a tremendous interest in joining the EU. Currently, the most important priority of Bosnian foreign policy, supported by many internal reforms, is preparation for accession to the EU. There are many reasons why it has become one of Bosnia's most vital political interests.

First of all, Bosnia and Herzegovina can overcome its political-security problems only through close cooperation with the EU. If Europe truly accepts Bosnia and Herzegovina as sovereign country, most Bosnian political problems will become insignificant. Also, as a natural part of Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina is very interested in becoming a positive security factor in the regional, not ballast. As a member of the EU, this country will have the motivation and the means to contribute to preventing organized crime, corruption, drug trafficking and illegal migration. Although it is not only an internal problem, Bosnia and Herzegovina is very interested in becoming more secure from criminal groups and people who do not respect the law. Next, increased foreign investment in the national economy is needed for further Bosnian development. As it works toward achieving European standards and is including in wider global markets, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be accepted as a safe and democratic country, and therefore a stabile area for economic investment. Finally, European Empires have been present in this region through history. Many European countries have become concerned about the destiny of this small country during the last twelve years. Because of that, people from Bosnia and Herzegovina have a right to be actual citizens of Europe. Their representatives have a right to a voice in European institutions.

THE EUROPEAN ROLE DURING AND AFTER THE RECENT WAR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Europe's role during modern Balkan and Bosnian history has been important and changeable. It should be noted that the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initially considered to be a European issue. At the same time, Europe lacked a clear and unified political approach to the problem. During and after the war, this fact was confirmed by the actions of

European countries. It is well known that France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Russia and other less influential countries have looked at Bosnia and Herzegovina with different interests in mind. It is also known that events in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been shaped by the political opinions of the administrations in Serbia and Montenegro and Croatia, and that these opinions are supported by their historical allies among the major European states. Because of this, it is very difficult for Europe to reach a consensus towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially towards Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unified country.

Europe completely failed to get its act together in the 1990's on a policy for the Balkans. As Yugoslavia broke into bits, Europe was largely impotent because it was not united. Some Member States wanted to keep Yugoslavia together at all cost, some wanted to manage its break-up, and others still felt we should stay out of the whole mess . . . Let us remember the consequences of our refusal to get involved. The shattered ruins of Vukovar. The ghastly siege of Sarajevo. The charnel house of Srebrenica. The smoking villages of Kosovo. The European Union did not commit these crimes. But 200,000 or more fellow Europeans died in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone. As Europeans we cannot avoid a heavy share of responsibility for what happened.¹⁰

Those are the words of Mr. Christopher Patten, the EU's External Relations Commissioner, pronounced before the German Bundestag on 28 April 2004. Patten is one of the EU officials who understand the consequences of Europe's disunity during the recent Balkan war. One of the main reasons why Europe was not involved decisively can be found in the divergent political interests and objectives of individual European countries. A group of authors from the EU Institute for Strategic Studies, in the book "Shift or Rift, Assessing U.S. – EU Relations after Iraq," describe the situation as a lack of cooperation that leads to ineffectiveness. They conclude:

The failure of UNPROFOR – a force made up mainly of West European troops – to protect the UN protected areas (most dramatically by the Dutch at Srebrenica), the failure of a massive reconstruction effort (costing nearly \$200 million eventually) in Mostar to reintegrate the city, the failure of international conference to find solutions that would stick (a failure to lift the siege of Sarajevo – the list is a long one).¹¹

Meanwhile, it is possible to conclude that Europe has become more interested in Bosnia and Herzegovina's security, well being, and prosperity today than ever before. It is not necessary to analyze whether Europe acts out of its own interest or a real will to support Bosnian efforts to leave the world of darkness and poverty behind. It is important that there are new initiatives and more positive relations between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both

sides have acknowledged a mutual interest in Bosnian accession to the EU as well as NATO. As a result, the EU has been decisive in supporting critical reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, some organizations from the EU have played a more focused role. For example, the Office of the High Representative, the EU Commission, the EU Police Mission, and the recently established the EU Forces, have made important contributions toward creating an improved political-security and economic situation.

The EU has significantly supported many of the world's organizations and individual countries both politically and actual economically. However, parallel action by the United Nations and the U.S. is irreplaceable. Due to the very positive American role, all politicians and people who feel Bosnia and Herzegovina as their native country have the greatest respect for the U.S.'s sincere friendship.

BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

There are many international organizations, institutions, and individuals who have contributed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's political-organizational achievements during the ten years of the post war period. However, nothing could have been achieved without the contributions of patriotic Bosnian politicians and citizens and the determination of the U.S. to assist in the country's recovery. These combined efforts give hope to the Bosnian people who feel a deep patriotism and love for their country.

THE U.S. ROLE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

During short history of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, the U.S. has played a decisive role. American diplomatic influence, military presence, and economic assistance has been tremendous. The origin of cooperation began in April 1992 when the U.S. recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent country. Bosnian victims and the international community believed that only the U.S. had the ability to prevent further war crimes, solve increased humanitarian problems, and stop a bloody war.

Initially, the U.S. role in Bosnia was limited and passive and can best be characterized as a policy of containment. However, since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in November of 1995 and the successful deployment of IFOR and the follow-on SFOR international stability forces, the U.S. has made great contributions to the reform process. Examples are reform of the Defense Sector and the establishment of the United Defense System, composed of former belligerents—a task that once seemed to be mission impossible. The U.S. administration recognized the importance of creating this organization and focused its efforts on this critical

task. As a result, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is over and the country is on the doorstep of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program.

Historical Aspects

At the beginning war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the U.S. did not have interests at stake sufficient to provoke serious action. However, after the EU announcement that it would pull out its contingents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the U.S. administration was forced to review policy towards the Balkans. The consequence of the change in policy was that the U.S. orchestrated the Washington Agreement that ended the war between the Croatian Defense Council (majority Bosnian Croats) and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (majority Bosnian Muslims – Bosniacs). Although still indecisive, this highlighted the fact that the American vision of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious Bosnia and Herzegovina was different than that of Europe. In addition to the political gains achieved through this agreement, the military situation improved because it righted the military balance between the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina - the Croatian Defense Council alliance and Army of Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serbs). The Agreement also helped set the stage for further negotiations aimed at ending the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1994, the U.S. also began conducting limited air strikes aimed at stopping the aggression of Serbian forces.

This policy changed radically in 1995, and the shift in U.S. policy toward Bosnia and Herzegovina has greatly influenced the current security situation in the country ever since. It was the tragedy of Srebrenica in the summer of 1995 that really spurred the Americans to action. In Srebrenica, the Serbs assaulted and occupied a United Nations protected area where Bosniacs had sought refuge. After occupying the area by force, Serb forces killed more than 8,000 unarmed Bosniacs. This incident, coupled with the mass killings of civilians in Sarajevo by artillery fire, resulted in American action.

The Clinton administration first used military forces in Bosnia in 1994 (tentatively) and 1995 (decisively). The interests it was protecting were secondary ones. There was no immediate threat to U.S. national security. There was of course a humanitarian purpose, especially after the Serbs overran Srebrenica and murdered much of its male Muslim population. There was also feeling that the United States, itself a multiethnic country, did not want to see the collapse of multiethnic Bosnia. More important for U.S. national security, by 1995 the NATO Alliance was a risk. The European forces that made up most of the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) were ineffective and subject to attack, especially if they moved to withdraw.¹²

According to an agreement with the United Nations, the U.S. became the lead nation during a military air campaign aimed at convincing the Serbs to negotiate a peace. At last, the U.S. was taking the lead in resolving the Balkan conflict, and before long the belligerents were in Dayton, Ohio to negotiate the termination of hostilities. In the military clauses of the peace agreement, it was agreed that the United Nations forces needed to be withdrawn with U.S. assistance. The U.S., as the lead NATO country, committed 20,000 troops to the Implementation Force and played a decisive role in implementing the peace settlement and in peace keeping and peace stabilization during the post war period.

Political Aspects

Bosnia and Herzegovina may not be considered as vital to American interests. However, the Bosnian situation presents regional security problems that could have much wider implications if not appropriately managed. According to The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, one of the ways to achieve national security goals is to "... work with others to defuse regional conflicts."¹³ Having that in mind, we could conclude that U.S. is interested in stability and democratization in the region. American assistance sends a strong political message to all those who have something different in mind. To illustrate the impact of the U.S. determination to assist Bosnian politicians and people on the way to prosperity I would like to present a few examples.

First, the U.S. administration, together with the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, plays a key role in guiding Bosnian efforts to build state level institutions and to strengthen the role of those institutions through diplomatic channels. The U.S. has been involved in establishing and forwarding the integration of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Security, and the Ministry of Defense, creating new laws on intelligence, customs policy, and taxes.

A major diplomatic contribution of U.S. assistance is the impact that American influence has on other international organizations and forces. The most important relationships are those with the Staff of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EU Forces. Each of these institutions or forces is very important to the regional security environment and in shaping the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The U.S. has helped in stabilizing the military balance among the entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as among Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. This contribution is crucial for implementing the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Accord.

The U.S. role has been important from the moment of war termination. Equipping and training the Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a military balance both within the country and also with neighboring countries. This process has made a significant contribution to confidence and security in the region. Also, with the military balance of power restored, it is well known that Bosnia and Herzegovina has accepted some international obligations in the area of defense. This is another positive outcome of U.S. policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. These actions are connected to the implementation of international agreements relating to chemical weapons protection and conventional armament limitation.

The U.S. is interested in seeing Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfill all obligations required to join the NATO Partnership for Peace Program, and ultimately, NATO. As part of that effort, the U.S. has provided expert and material assistance for the establishment of state level defense institutions. Within programs devoted to Foreign Military Sales and International Military Education Training for the year 2004, according to information from the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the U.S. planned to spend 15 millions dollars in financial aid for equipment and training.

Finally, the NATO Staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by an American general, continues to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in reforming the security sector so that it will be possible to join the Partnership for Peace Program and NATO in the future. With these reforms in place, Bosnia and Herzegovina will become a contributor in anti-terrorist combat and will continue to seek out and capture suspected war criminals.

Unfortunately, there are also some negative aspects of the current U.S. policy toward Bosnia and Herzegovina. As part of a wider process, the U.S. administration has decided to minimize its military presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A key aspect of that decision is to transition authority from NATO to EU Forces in respect to the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Accord. The transition occurred at the beginning of December 2004. It means withdrawal of all American troops from Bosnia and Herzegovina, apart from a small, symbolic troop presence in support of the NATO Staff in Sarajevo.

The new Ambassador of the U.S. to Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Douglas L. McElhaney, during a reception in the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, emphasized the American commitment to stay and play an active role in the country. He stated that the joint efforts of the EU, the international community, and the U.S. are equally important for Bosnian prosperity. A similar diplomatic message was delivered by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell regarding the transition of authority from NATO to the EU Forces.

The United States and NATO are not leaving Bosnia. A new NATO Headquarters – Sarajevo, in close cooperation with the European Union – is taking up the challenge of defense reform, continuing its efforts to locate and apprehend indicted war criminals, and working with local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to combat terrorism. The United States remains committed to the security and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina through a significant contribution to the NATO headquarters and a continued presence at Camp Eagle in Tuzla.¹⁴

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA'S CONTRIBUTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina has sought to express its gratitude to the people and administration of the U.S. for their involvement in resolving the recent Bosnian conflict and bloody war. There are situations when the U.S. needs its friends' support and actual assistance. Because of that, Bosnian authorities have made some very difficult political decisions.

For instance, the Coalition Operation Iraqi Freedom has divided international opinion about the necessity of undertaking military action in Iraq. Different countries have different views on engagement in that operation. The decision either to join the coalition or to stay aside has been a challenge for many governments around the world. As many others, Bosnia and Herzegovina has decided to support joint efforts combating terrorism, contributing to Iraqi recovery and building democracy and prosperity. The road from the initial proposal, through the interagency decision-making process, to the Presidential decision has been complex and full of challenges for politicians. At the beginning of 2004, the Bosnian Presidency announced the decision and the Bosnian Parliamentary Assembly confirmed the intention to deploy one unit in Iraq. The Bosnian unit will be composed of 36 people and its mission will be unexploded ordnance demolition. Bosnian experts and political decision-makers are conscious of what impact or consequences this decision could have on Bosnian relations with influential international organizations, the United Nations, and the EU, as well as some important friendly countries. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina has good reasons and substantial motivation to take this course of action. The importance of a good relationship with the U.S. has been one of the most important goals in this process. The Bosnian decision to send unit in support of the coalition forces in Iraq is an important political step.

Also, Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the countries that signed the agreement with the U.S. relating to the famous Article 98 concerning cooperation with the International Criminal Court. Unfortunately, some writers on international relations have criticized this political decision on the part of the Bosnian Council of Ministers. They do not analyze historical facts and experience, and they make judgments without taking into consideration actual reasons why Bosnia and Herzegovina is sometimes pro-American despite its location in the heart of Europe.

One example of this is how Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand is very keen – at least in rhetoric – to follow demands of the European Union in adopting universal human rights and cooperation with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, while on the other hand it has made an agreement with the United States not to hand over U.S. citizens to the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC). Does this mean that Bosnia and Herzegovina is more loyal towards the U.S. Administration than towards the EU and its standards concerning international humanitarian law? Or does it simply reflect a country desperate for acceptance by the international community – and external funding?¹⁵

In addition, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been very cooperative with the U.S. in delivering five persons accused or suspected of terrorist activities. They are held in Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba. Although that event produced a lot of dissenting opinion, Bosnia and Herzegovina wished to demonstrate its friendship and dedication to contributing to the joint anti-terrorist campaign.

Finally, after the recent transition of authority between NATO and the EU Forces, and the withdrawal of NATO from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Presidency sincerely offered the opportunity to the Government of the U.S. to retain some part of its force inside the country. As a result, one U.S. Army company is settled in a former Stabilization Force base in north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina with the mission to support the newly established NATO Staff in the capitol Sarajevo. That unit could be the nucleus of a wider American presence in this region if it becomes necessary in order to protect national interests.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Relations between the U.S. and EU have tremendous importance for global security. Their mutual understanding and cooperation are significant preconditions for a safe, prosperous, and peaceful world in the future. Those two world powers have significant shared interests. For the most part, their relations are very friendly and smooth. However, they are also sometimes at odds over political, economic, and global security issues.

HISTORY

Interaction between the U.S. and Europe has developed from their earliest existence. It is important to understand that good relationships between them are fundamental to their mutual security and prosperity. However, during the twentieth century, and especially during the Second World War and Cold War period, those relationships were very dynamic and challenging. Relationships between the U.S. and most Western Europe were very positive and

prosperous. On other side, there were many problems with Eastern European countries. This situation would only change with the end of the Cold War.

Initially, it is important to mention the significant role of the former General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Although formed as a United Nations agency during the year 1948, it unified American and European efforts to reduce barriers to international trade and to eliminate discriminatory treatment in international commerce. Later, in the year 1995, it became the well-known World Trade Organization.

One of the first and most important results and trends of American - European confidence was establishing and strengthening NATO after the Second World War. From its origins in 1949, NATO has provided collective defense for all its members. This unique political-military organization, for almost six decades, has been the most influential factor of stability in American-European relations. NATO offered physical security and protection for many European countries during the Cold War. It was the only instrument capable of preventing the Soviet Union from spreading its influence over Europe and assaulting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of many small countries. Of course, NATO has played a significant role around the globe terminating regional crises and ensuring stability and peace for many countries.

Also, there are other instruments that have contributed to excellent cooperation and mutual well being among Euro-Atlantic countries. The role of the organization G-7/G-8, which was formed in 1975, is tremendous. It is composed of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the U.S., and manages most of the world's capabilities in such fields as trade, finance, and direct foreign investment.¹⁶

CURRENT RELATIONS

Recent historical events have had significant implications for relations between the U.S. and the EU. There is still much unity and mutual understanding over strategic issues. But, there are also some gaps, as well as political, economic and other movements on both sides that do not favor either's interests.

Mutual Interests

The U.S. has excellent relationships with many individual European countries. On the basis of numerous special agreements, countries associated with the EU have established bilateral cooperation with the U.S. as well as other countries. Today, NATO is one of the most important factors of Euro-Atlantic partnership. This organization is especially well supported by the U.S. as a critical instrument of American presence and influence in this and other parts of the globe. In fact, NATO is also still a vital factor for overall European security. Europe should

continue to respect American presence, friendship, and mutual cooperation. Signing a New Transatlantic Agenda on 3 December 1995, the President of the U.S. and President of the European Council agreed that joint action is more necessary than consultation between two strategic partners. They emphasized four areas of future cooperation:

- promoting peace and stability, democracy and development around the world; - responding to global challenges; - contributing to the expansion of the world trade and closer economic relations; - building bridges across the Atlantic.¹⁷

Those mutual interests are still valid for both the U.S. and EU. However, words are sometimes different than actions. The question is whether such sentiments will really make Euro-American relations more sincere and closer? The answer should not be difficult. There is much space for joint action and both powers should take advantage of that fact.

Differences and Problems

It is well known that Europe was dramatically reshaped after the break-up of the former Soviet Union and collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. One consequence was German unification. In the changed environment, the disintegration of former Yugoslavia and a series of crises in the Persian Gulf, especially the current war in Iraq, brought to the fore different interests and divergent political-security considerations between the U.S. and some EU member countries. For instance, there is a lot of disagreement between the U.S. and France, Germany, and some other countries. Consequently, we cannot claim that there is consensus about all important issues between the U.S. and the EU as an organization. In the words of one influential commentator:

It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On the all-important question of power – the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power – American and European perspectives are diverging.¹⁸

If we wish to understand possible future relations between the U.S. and EU, we have to consider the current and future economic, foreign, and security policy of the EU as well as American interests in this region. If we do so, we cannot fail to become aware of some differences and possible problems. The EU seeks to establish a real balance with the U.S., and to emerge as a superpower in its own right. Today, that trend is visible in the area of security, market, finance, legislative and military presence.

Having in mind the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe signed by Heads of State and Government on 29 November 2004, and the European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003, we should believe that the EU will be more unified than ever before. Europe will also become more capable of responding efficiently to international crises and of contributing to world peace. As a first result, EU Forces have been deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1 December 2004 as the primary military factor responsible for overseeing the realization of the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Accord. Although it is a very complex issue, a more robust European defense identity is one of the future military objectives of the EU. The Single Market and monetary union have the intention of strengthening the EU as one of the most decisive economic and financial factors in the world. We may conclude that the EU shows more and more desire to act independently. There is a very intensive European integration process and decisive expansion of the EU membership underway. These dynamics express a commitment to security, political, and economic unification through a process of increasing collective security, democratization, rule of law, economic development and respect for human rights.

The single currency and the European defense plan appear to reflect a desire on the part of the European Union states to develop an autonomous global role, pooling resources to create a powerful economic and political bloc that can act as a global superpower.¹⁹

Due to the strengthening of the EU and its influence upon other European countries, we can identify five possible consequences for the U.S..²⁰ Firstly, creating a European Security Strategy and establishing European forces could minimize (though not exclude) NATO's role. Secondly, European foreign policy will be more independent and less aligned with the American position. Next, special relations between the U.S. and individual countries or the EU as a whole could become less important (though they will not be eliminated). Fourthly, it is expected that the EU will be more independent on foreign policy and regional issues where it perceives interests at stake. However, Europe will continue to look to the U.S. as the most influential player in regard to managing global affairs and addressing world problems. Finally, Europe will continue to make some effort to create a defense capability. But, NATO will continue to play a tremendous role and will remain a key factor of overall security and one of the most important organizations in the Euro-Atlantic relationship.

However, this is not first time in modern history that European political and public opinion has been divided. Only sixty years ago European countries fought against each other during five years of bloody war. Currently, Europe is still divided over the question of Coalition engagement

in Operation Iraqi Freedom led by the U.S. It is very possible that European disagreement about different political issues will continue to be a weak point of the process of European integration. Of course, it is not good for regional stability. Producing and deepening further problems is neither in the European nor the American interest. The U.S. and EU need each other as partners on the same road, in the interest of their mutual and global security and prosperity.²¹ If they fail, not only will they themselves suffer, many other countries will feel the consequences. Certainly, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be one of them.

Because of what has been mentioned relating to security issues, interests, and objectives, it is reasonable to recommend that the U.S. should

continue its longstanding policy of supporting European integration; ... champion the cause of a broader European Community; ... support NATO reforms that promote the complementarity of NATO and the EC/WEU; ... focus its bilateral diplomacy on nations who are the most influential in the European Community; and ... strengthen its bilateral relationship with the EC in economic and strategy policy.²²

THE ROLE AND INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND EUROPEAN UNION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

As two the most influential factors for a stable security situation in the Balkans, both the U.S. and EU must maintain a strong presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political-security situation in the country has been significantly improved during post war period. However, it is still not possible to consider Bosnia and Herzegovina as a safe country without the large diplomatic, economic, and partly militarily presence of the international community. So far, the U.S. as an individual country, and the EU as an organization, have contributed the most to Bosnian achievements during the past ten years. However, today their views about their roles and interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina may be changing: "The United States of America's interests in the Balkans are multiple but secondary; European interests are more vital but varied."²³

The EU decisively supports Bosnian efforts for accession into the community of democratic and prosperous European countries. Europe needs a safe and peaceful Balkans, free of corruption, organized crime, terrorism, and illegal migration. The road is long and demanding. But Europe is Bosnia and Herzegovina's destiny. The EU Institute for Security Studies, in its assessment of relations, claims that the U.S. is no longer a vital power in the Balkans and should not engage much on different reforms.²⁴ In fact, the U.S. has been ready and willing to yield initiative to the EU. Although its role has been tremendous and never passive

during the past ten years, the U.S. has sought to facilitate a leading role for the EU and to encourage its bigger involvement in solving Bosnian issues. The recent transition of authority from NATO to EU Forces is one of the proofs of this Euro-Atlantic political trend. But, it does not mean that America is consigned to oblivion, or removed from any kind of role in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina build its future.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

So far, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have an officially developed National Security Strategy. The absence of so significant a document is just one result of the many disagreements between Bosnian leaders. There are some high-ranking politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina who are not truly interested in the construction of state institutions and unified armed and police forces. They are not actually interested in fulfilling requirements for Bosnia to join the Partnership for Peace or NATO. This is especially true in the Republika Srpska. Previously, U.S. efforts have achieved good results in dealing with these politicians. Consequently, there is still a wide range of opinions about Bosnia's future. The most extreme, and still very influential politicians, led by ideas of separation and union with neighboring countries, do everything possible to prevent or postpone progressive reform. As a consequence, we have a situation where it is difficult to define Bosnian national interests and objectives that can be sincerely supported by all political parties and citizens. Nonetheless, those interests and objectives have been partly determined and discussed through strategic documents within different state level departments.

BOSNIAN INTERESTS IN THE AREA OF FOREIGN POLICY

According to the General Directions and Priorities for the Implementation of the Foreign Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed by the Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency on March 2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina intends to maintain and develop transparent bilateral and multilateral cooperation with numerous countries and international organizations.²⁵ While maintaining good relations with the United Nations, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of Islamic Countries, and countries of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, Bosnia and Herzegovina will endeavor to integrate the country into the family of Euro-Atlantic organizations, especially NATO and the EU. This is the country's first strategic priority, and significant efforts are underway to facilitate its realization. Also, foreign policy emphasizes the importance of maintaining good relationships with neighbor countries.

This is not intended to make other foreign policy objectives seem less important, but rather to stress that the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Euro-Atlantic organizations is the primary objective. When Bosnia fulfills all required conditions for joining the EU and NATO it will bring tremendous political and economic benefits to the country and its citizens, as well as to the entire international community. Bosnia and Herzegovina will be safer, more democratic, and economically prosperous, a state where law and human rights will be normal society values.

STRONG TIES WITH BOTH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be both a prospective member of the EU and a strategic partner with the U.S. The global political interests of the EU and the U.S., as well as their views on security policy in this region, have sometimes differed. However, the EU and the U.S. will continue to play the most decisive role in Balkans, and they will be very influential in shaping the Bosnian political-security situation. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to understand the political environment and work hard to maintain a balance between these two powers. This country has to respect learned lessons about American sincere support, should consider its geopolitical position within Europe, and carefully analyze current political relations between the EU and the U.S.

Mutual interests and current bilateral problems between the U.S. and the EU have already been mentioned in this paper. Having that in mind, it is not always possible to agree about everything with both political partners at same time. Sometimes, we will have to take steps that will not find favor with both sides. Of course, any policy of balance is difficult. But Bosnia and Herzegovina has already made political gestures toward both the EU and the U.S.

Achievements on addressing the 16 priority areas of reform identified in the European Commission's Feasibility Studies are the most significant results for the EU. Those reforms will make Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Europe as a whole, safer from the threats of terrorism, organized crime, and illegal trafficking. On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made some political decisions in regards to approaching the United States of America with which the EU, or some individual European countries, are not happy. This is the case with the bilateral agreement on Article 98 of the International Criminal Court, the decision to send a Bosnian unit to Iraq in support of coalition efforts, and offers to the U.S. to establish a military base in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the list of other bilateral activities between these two countries is long and Europe is sometimes jealous of Bosnian openness toward the U.S.

The U.S. and EU must continue to play a decisive role in Bosnia and Herzegovina and not lose interest. Any delay in the termination of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina or any attempt to return it to the dark days of the recent war could be new threat to regional stability. Keeping in mind the fact that the current reforms are in a very sensitive phase for overall success and security, and keeping in mind efforts to create a democratic, unified, and sustainable Bosnia and Herzegovina that is compatible with the international community, it is very important to have the strong support of the U.S. and EU. Bosnia and Herzegovina and other new countries of the Balkan Peninsula are now part of the political process and the two great powers need to bring the job to a successful completion if true gains are to be realized.

WHY ARE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IMPORTANT?

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a physical part of Europe, must make efforts to accept European standards and become a respectful member of this family. This will require many political and economic changes, and considerable sacrifice. However, accession to the EU offers many benefits and a better future for Bosnian youth. Membership means democratic standards, security, and better opportunities. After the European Parliament accepted the first EU Constitution at the beginning of January 2005 (which must now be ratified by all 25 members), Europe seems more and more unified. As an administrative unit, the EU is one big organization. But, at same time, every member has its individual interests, and very often they are not mutual interests. Due to recent history Bosnian politicians must be very careful. Although the EU seems determined to bring an end to the Bosnian crises, we can never be sure that all of the most influential countries will maintain this political approach. It is true that European countries need a stable and peaceful Balkans, but they do not always agree about a desired end state. Also, the EU is a complex system and it cannot yet always function effectively as a single unit. For example, it is impossible to believe that 25 European countries, with different Ministries of Defense, doctrine, equipment, training, and standard procedures, could establish a unified military structure that will be as influential and operationally effective as are the Armed Forces of the U.S.

On the other hand, the U.S. has demonstrated its ability to establish clear objectives and effectively perform missions in accordance with a defined strategy. In the case of the Bosnian war the U.S. was for a long time indecisive and waited too long. However, after the decision to act had been made the country was very involved and committed to achieve its goals. Also, during the postwar period, the U.S. has been the most helpful individual country. American political attitude are still very influential. It is a fact that the American administration works

effectively and honors its promises. Today, many anti-Bosnian politicians are not happy about the American role in pursuing reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many politicians from the Republika Srpska would be very happy if the U.S. lost interest in their region. If this happened, they would have more freedom to obstruct current reforms on the Bosnian path to Euro-Atlantic integration. After which, they could be closer to achieve their separatist ideal. Their behavior and political action is one of the reasons why it is not underlined in Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy that the country has to maintain strong bilateral relationships with the U.S. as an individual country. But, although everybody will not be happy, that bilateral relationship must be considered as a vital Bosnian national interest.

SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

For the moment it is difficult to recommend an appropriate political strategy that can be accepted by all relevant domestic political factors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, the path toward Euro-Atlantic integration is the only reasonable political choice for the future. However, political resistance to strengthening state level institutions and unifying the country, as two important conditions for Bosnian accession, will not disappear soon.

Officially, the national interest of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy is to be integrated in the family of the Euro-Atlantic organizations. Also, it is very important for this country to have good relations both with neighboring countries and with EU as an organization. However, it should also be in Bosnia's vital interest to maintain a strong strategic bilateral relationship with the U.S.

In accordance with its geographical position, historical background, and economic interests, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a natural part of Europe and the European security system. However, the recent war has revealed that different countries have divergent interests, and consequently divergent viewpoints, with regard to Bosnian political issues. The fact is that Europe does not have a truly unified political approach for solving this problem. Although the EU is currently directed to support Bosnian state level institutions, there is always the possibility for diametrically opposed approaches to this issue to emerge. Some forces in Europe have considered and supported separatist ideas within Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁶ Having in mind that such ideas are still alive in Bosnian nationalistic circles, there is always fear that some individual European countries may turn to support the most reactionary Bosnian parties and politicians. All in all, pro-democratic and pro-Bosnian political parties must seek to strengthen and stabilize Bosnia's progressive role in the Balkans and Europe. Also, path of association with

the EU is a natural process whose pace will be determined as Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to express its identity and make positive contributions to regional security.

The U.S. has played the most decisive and positive role during Bosnia's brief modern history. Since recognizing Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent country, through the Washington and Dayton Peace Agreements, which terminated the bloody war, to assistance and support for establishing and building state level institutions, the U.S. has been the most influential contributor to a prosperous future for Bosnian citizens. The U.S. supports a vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unified multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious state that is self-sustaining. Inspired by respect for the American role, Bosnia and Herzegovina has already taken some actions to show its commitment to good relations. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina is not considered vital to American national interest, Bosnia's open and cooperative policy has attracted further serious American involvement. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs the decisive role of the U.S. and should continue to take steps that will promote mutual friendship.

Bosnia and Herzegovina must understand the global political situation and maintain a balance between the U.S. and the EU. The balance is difficult, because Europe and America occasionally have diametrically opposed political approaches, and neither is likely to be happy with the other's decision. Occasionally, misunderstanding between two powers will put Bosnian politicians in an unpleasant position. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina has already made some political decisions intended to court favor with both the EU and the U.S. It is true that the EU intends to play a serious role, but it will remain difficult for Europe to be as decisive as the U.S. For instance, because of the complex international structure, it will be very difficult for Europe to catch up to American efficiency in conducting joint military operations.

CONCLUSION

After long historical suffering and the recent bloody war, Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to become a modern country establishing democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and prosperous economic development. In its efforts to achieve these strategic objectives, the country must confront many political-security and economic challenges. Some of them are difficult because they are consequences of war and the current internal political struggle. Although all political factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have officially recognized that Bosnia's future lies in Euro-Atlantic integrations, some nationalistic subjects are trying hard to stop all progressive movements. Currently, both the EU and the U.S. have made a great effort to

support Bosnian orientated politicians and citizens on the path of prosperity and accession to the EU and NATO.

On the path of integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed broad bilateral cooperation with different political subjects round the world. However, the EU and the U.S. are identified as the country's most important strategic partners. Those two global players exerted a tremendous influence in modern Bosnian history, and they will continue to influence Bosnia's future. But, their roles and global political-security interests, as well as more focused interests in the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been occasionally divergent. As a consequence, many Bosnian citizens have suffered.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose strategic foreign policy objective is building and maintaining progressive relations with both the EU and the U.S., has to make clever political decisions in order to balance between the often-conflicting policies of these two strategic partners. Political balance is sometimes complex, but Bosnia and Herzegovina has already made respectful political steps in regard to both strategic partners. Respecting all Bosnian patriots' efforts, as well as the international community's politico-economic investment, we would like to believe that European and American diplomatic assistance and economic support will continue to play a decisive role during this critical moment of Bosnia's existence. The benefits of mutual efforts should benefit not only Bosnians, but Europeans and Americans as well.

WORD COUNT=11,354

ENDNOTES

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²⁰James B. Steinberg, *An Ever Closer Union, European Integration and Its Implications for the Future of U.S. – European Relations*. Santa Monica: RAND, 1993.

²¹The Europe of the last five centuries has been arena of many savage wars, and the risk of more is still present and immediate. The presence of American interest and power in building a European supranational political structure will play, for the next few decades a decisive role in developing and firming the economic, cultural, and political mosaic of this continent. This trend is clearly present in the ongoing expansion of NATO toward the East. The trend will certainly continue and will act as the main impulse shaping events in Eastern European countries. See Rusmir Mahmutcehajic, *The Denial of Bosnia*, Originally published in Sarajevo 1998 by "DID" Publishing House as *Kriva politika: Citanje historije i povjerenje u Bosni*. English translation published 2000 by Pennsylvania State University Press.

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